

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01

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-----300602Z 076134 /11

R 300435Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1669

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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FROM: RED/ESCAP/MEKONG PROGRAM

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: RED ESCAP: MEKONG SECRETARIAT/VIETNAMESE DISCUSSIONS OF
19 APRIL

1. SUMMARY: THE MEKONG PROGRAM WAS INSERTED AS THE FIRST AGENDA ITEM IN THE ESCAP PLENARY OF 29 APRIL. CHAIRMAN BEGAN BY READING JOINT LPDR/SRV/RTG COMMUNIQUE (FULL TEXT BELOW) NOTING AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE BY THE THREE DELEGATIONS TO RECOMMEND TO THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS REACTIVATION OF THE MEKONG PROGRAM VIA AN INTERIM COMMITTEE PENDING THE RESUMPTION OF THE PARTICIPATION OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA. READING OF THE COMMUNIQUE WAS FOLLOWED BY PRESENTATION OF STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FROM NINE DELEGATIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE THREE RIPARIAN STATE DELEGATIONS THEMSELVES. CHAIRMAN CONCLUDED MEKONG SESSION BY NOTING EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS STORIES GROWING OUT OF THE MEKONG PROGRAM AND CALLING FOR SIGNIFICANT

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INCREASES IN FUNDING FOR THE ACTIVITY. END SUMMARY:

2. EVENTS DURING THE CURRENT EXCAP SESSION LEADING UP TO THE ABOVE NOTED COMMUNIQUE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A SETBACK IN SRV/LPDR/RTG NEGOTIATIONS EXPERIENCED ON 28 APRIL WHEREIN THE SRV BEGAN INSISTING THAT THE FIRST PRIORITY OF THE MEKONG PROGRAM SHOULD BE POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION IN THE

INDOCHINA COUNTRIES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED SEPTELS. THE OUTCOME OF THESE LAST MINUTE NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE BACK ROOM OF A SMALL RESTAURANT AT LUNCHTIME, IS CLEARLY RELECTED IN PARA TWO FO THE JOING COMMUNIQUE, THE FULL TEXT OF WHICH IS AS FOLLOWS:

COMMUNIQUE CONCERNING THE MEKONG COMMITTEE

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM AND THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND HAVE HELD A SERIES OF INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS, IN CONJUNCTION, WITH THE 33RD SESSION OF ESCAP, CONCERNING THE REACTIVATION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR CO-ORDINATION OF INVESTIGATIONS OF THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN. THEY HAVE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO RECOMMEND TO THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERIM COMMITTEE TO PROCEED WITH NEW WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN THAT ARE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE THREE RIPARIAN COUNTRIES CONCERNED, PENDING THE RESUMPTION OF THE PARTICIPATION OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA IN THE WORK OF THE MEKONG COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BE WARMLY WELCOMED BY THE THREE COUNTRIES WHO ARE ALREADY MEMBERS.

IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT THE WATER RESOURCES OF THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN MUST BE DEVELOPED TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL AND POWER PRODUCTION, IN ORDER TO MEET ADEQUATELY AND EFFICIENTLY THE NEEDS FOR RECONTSTRUCTION AND GROWING DEVELOPMENT OF THE THREE COUNTRIES IN INDOCHINA, AND THE GROWING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF THAILAND.

TO THIS END, THE PRESENT SECRETARIAT OF THE MEKONG COMMITTEE SHOJL PURSUE THE ON-GOING PROGRAMME, AND SHOULD BE READY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO EXPAND ITS ACTIVITIES, WITH ADEQUATE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE CO-OPERATING COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE UNTIED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, AS WELL AS ESCAP AND UNDP. IT WAS ALSO AGREED TO RECOMMEND THAT DISCUSSIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN VIENTIANE, IN ORDER TO REACH A DEFINITIVE BASIC AGREEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. THROUGHOUT THE SESSION THE VIETNAMESE HAVE MANAGED TO KEEP THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME OF THE MANY PRIVATE SESSIONS AMONG THE EXECUTIVE AGENT AND THE THREE RIPARIAN STATES IN DOUBT. THUS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF INDONESIA, ALL NINE DELEGATIONS SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM SPOKE FROM HASTILY PREPARED OR REVISED STATEMENTS. ALL NINE WELCOMED REACTIVATION OF THE COMMITTEE AND ALL BUT THE USSR PLEDGED SUPPORT. MOST LAUDED MR. VAN DER OORD AND THE SECRETARIAT FOR THEIR WORK DURING THE PAST DIFFICULT TWO YEARS AND COMMENTED ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REACTIVATION OF THE COMMITTEE TO PEACE IN THE AREA. THE ESSENCE OF

INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY STATEMENTS, IN ORDER OF OCCURRENCE, ARE
AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE NETHERLANDS: AS THE FIRST COUNTRY SPEAKER
THEY BEGAN BY NOTING QUOTE WE HAVE JUST WITNESSED THE
BIRTH OF PEACE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD UNQUOTE: SPEAKER
ALSO NOTED THAT APART FROM THE U.S. \$3.6 MILLION RECENTLY
QUOTE DEFROZED UNQUOTE HE WAS CONFIDENT MORE
RESOURCES WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE BY THE NETHERLANDS
GOVERNMENT, AND THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE THE UNDP HAS AN
OBLIGATION TO INCREASE ITS CONTRIBUTION IN THE NEAREST
FUTURE.

B. INDONESIA. NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THEIR CONTRIBUTION
TO THE CONTINGENCY FUND OF THIS PROJECT IS A MODEST ONE,
INDONESIA WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT IT.

C. AUSTRALIA: NOTED PROJECT ONE OF MOST IMPORTANT
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ESCAP PROJECTS, THAT AUSTRALIA CONTRIBUTED U.S. \$110,000 IN
1976/77 AND QUOTE AUSTRALIA IS PREPARED TO GIVE FAVORABLE
CONSIDERATION TO A CONTRIBUTION TO THE MEKONG SECRETARIAT
IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR 1977/78, OF AT LEAST THE SAME
MAGNITUDE AS IN 1976 UNQUOTE. AND THEY FURTHER
NOTED THIS IS AN EXPRESSION OF THEIR
BELIEF IN THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL
COOPERATION BETWEEN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE REGION
AND THE CONTRIBUTION THIS MAKES TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF
UNDERSTANDING AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONS AMONG THEM.

D. USSR: NOTED ESCAP NOW CONTRIBUTING RESTORATION
FROM THE RAVAGES OF WAR, THAT THEY NOTE WITH SATISFACTION
THE COMMUNIQUE AND THE RESUMPTION OF PRACTICAL WORK, THAT
THE DELTA REGION OF THE SRV WILL RECEIVE APPROPRIATE
ATTENTION, AND THAT THE FOURTH MEMBER WILL TAKE PART IN
THE PROGRAM IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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E. JAPAN: NOTED THEIR PAST INVOLVEMENT IN THE
PROGRAM, WELCOMED THE PARTICIPATION OF THE SRV, THAT WORK
BE RESUMED ASAP AND THAT IN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR THEY ARE
READY TO CONTRIBUTE U.S. \$30,000 TO THE INSTITUTIONAL
SUPPORT FUNDS FOR THE SECRETARIAT.

F. FRANCE: RECAPITULATED PAST AND PRESENT FRENCH
INVOLVEMENT IN MEKONG PROGRAM, INCLUDING U.S. \$30,000
FOR SECRETARIAT SUPPORT, AND NOTED WILLINGNESS CONTINUE
PROVISION TWO EXPERTS PLUS AN ADDITIONAL NEW
CONTRIBUTION OF U.S. \$15,000 FOR THIS YEAR (1977).

G. SWEDEN: NOTED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE RAVAGES
OF WAR THEY FEEL IT ONLY NATURAL THEY PRATICIPATE IN AN
INTERNATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT IN INDOCHINA, THAT FOR
THIS REASON THEIR GOVERNEMENT IS ALREADY ENGAGED
VIA BILATERAL CHANNELS IN SUCH A PROGRAM IN INDOCHINA
AND THAT THEY WELCOME REACTIVATION OF THE COMMITTEE AS A
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FURTHER POSITIVE STEP.

H. U.K.: NOTED U.K. AMONG THOSE CONSTIBUTION
TO SURVIVAL OF COMMITTEE LAST YEAR AND INTEND MAKE A FUTURE
CONTRIBUTION TO THE SECRETARIAT EXPENSES THIS YEAR.

I. NEW ZEALAND: NOTED THEY CONTRIBUTED TO MEETING
SECRETARIAT EXPENSES LAST YEAR, PLAN TO CONTRIBUTE AN
ADDITIONAL U.S. \$15,000 FOR THAT PURPOSE AND STRESSED THE
HOPE THE FULL COMMITTEE (MEANING KAMPUCHEA AS WELL) COULD
RECONVENE IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE.

J. LPDR: NOTED AGREEMENT AS EXPRESSED IN COMMUNIQUE

OBTAINED THROUGH LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS AND DUE COMMON INTEREST, (NOT PRIVATE, AND COMMON SENSE, BUT THAT SOME ADJUSTMENT IN PHILOSOPHY IS REQUIRED. LAO THANKED NUMBER DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING ADB.

K. SRV: NOTED MEKONG ANNUAL REPORT SHOWS MR. VAN DE OORD AND THE SECRETARIAT STAFF HAD TO OVERCOME MANY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS, AND THAT RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCES AND FACILITIES IS THEIR MOST IMPORTANT ENDEAVOR. THEY SUPPORTED THIS BY ADVISING THEY HAVE BUILT VERY LARGE NUMBERS OF WATER WORKS AND RELATED ENTERPRISES DURING THE LAST YEAR OR SO. SRV DELEGATE FURTHER NOTED ADB, UNDP, DUTCH, ET AL. ASSISTANCE IN COOPERATION WITH THE MEKONG SECRETARIAT IS FULLY JUSTIFIED DUE THE SUFFERING OF QUOTE A WAR OF SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION OVER SEVERAL DECADES UNQUOTE. IN CLOSING THEY COMMENTED ON HOW THE WAR PREVENTED ADEQUATE ASSISTANCE FROM THE MEKONG PROGRAM AND THAT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PROCEED IS WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING.

1. RTG: ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS TO PROGRAM, IRRESPECTIVE OF DIFFERING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SYSTEMS. DELEGATE ADVISED OF THAILAND'S CAREFUL ADHERENCE TO MEKONG PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY IN CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL PROJECTS SO THAT THEY DO NOT DECREASE THE FLOW TO DOWNSTREAM AREAS AND HOPED THAT DONOR AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION ASSISTANCE WILL CONTINUE.

4. COMMENT: THE VIETNAMESE APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS ON REACTIVATION OF THE MEKONG PROGRAM IS WORTHY OF COMMENT. THEY BEGAN BY SELECTING AN ESCAP DELEGATION ESPECIALLY WELL SUITED FOR THIS TASK, INCLUDING THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE OF HYDRAULIC RESOURCES, MINISTRY OF WATERS, DISCUSSIONS AS AND AS WE VIEW THEM WERE FIRST UNDERTAKEN BY THE VIETNAMESE ON THREE PLANES: AMENABLE AND CLEARLY POSITIVE WHILE DEALING WITH THE SECRETARIAT IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY THAI REPRESENTATIVE, DIFFICULT AND VITOLIC IN THE BEGINNING TOWARD THE THAIS IN BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION; AND NON-COMMITAL AND MYSTERIOUS, AS REGARDS THEIR INTENTIONS TOWARD THE MEKONG PROGRAM, IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHER ESCAP DELEGATES AND POTENTIAL DONORS (A POSTURE WHICH THEY MAINTAINED UP UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT). THIS ASSURED MAXIMUM ATTENTION, PRESS COVERAGE-NEGOTIATING POSITION, AND EFFECT. DURING MANY PRIVATE SESSIONS WITH THE THAIS (WE DO NOT KNOW AS YET HOW MANY) THE GRADUALLY WORKED INTO A TWO-STEPS-FORWARD-ONE-STEP BACK PROCEDURE, WITH WHICH THEY CONCLUDED THE NEGOTIATIONS.

AND, AS THEY DEEMED APPROPRIATE, THEY UTILIZED THE LAO DELEGATION TO BOTH ENTICE AND RESIST THE THAI EFFORTS. IN THE FACE OF SUCH DIFFICULT ODDS AND TACTICS, THE THAI ARE TO BE COMMENDED FOR BOTH THEIR RESILIENCY AND NEGOTIATION ABILITY. END COMMENT.

5. KITCHEN HAD SEVERAL BACKGROUND DISCUSSIONS WITH UNDP AA JOSEPH, WHO WILL BE A PIVOTAL REP. IN UNDP INVOLVEMENT AND FINANCING. HE INDICATED THAT HANOI IS NOW INSISTING UPON A RESIDENT REP OFFICE AND STAFF IN HANOI. HE ALSO NOTED SEVERAL ANCILLARY PROJECTS ARE ON THE DRAWING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BOARD AND IMPLEMENTATION IS BEING URGED. THE QUESTION OF NATIONALITY OF THE AFORENOTED REP IS NOW BEING EXPLORED AND U.S. VIEWS WOULD BE WELCOMED. OTHER QUESTIONS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE RAISED FOR GUIDANCE/APPROVAL AT THE 24TH UNDP GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING. WHITEHOUSE

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